

10.0 GROWTH-INDUCING IMPACTS

PURPOSE

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requires the discussion of the ways in which a project could foster economic or population growth, or the construction of additional housing, either directly or indirectly, in the surrounding environment. Included in this are projects that would remove obstacles to population growth or develop an isolated or adjacent area of open space. Such discussion should also include the characteristics of a project, which may encourage and/or facilitate other activities that, either individually or cumulatively, could significantly affect the environment. CEQA emphasizes that growth in an area should not be considered beneficial, detrimental or of little significance. The purpose of this section is to evaluate the growth-inducing potential of this project.

INTRODUCTION

The *State CEQA Guidelines* require an EIR to “discuss the ways in which the proposed project could foster economic or population growth, or the construction of additional housing, either directly or indirectly, in the surrounding environment” (*State CEQA Guidelines*, Section 15126.2). The guidelines, though, do not require or even suggest that an EIR speculate with respect to the specific growth that the project may induce, such as where such growth would occur, in what form it would occur, or when it would occur (*State CEQA Guidelines*, Section 15145). It also must not be assumed that induced growth in a particular area is necessarily beneficial, detrimental, or of little significance to the environment (*State CEQA Guidelines*, Section 15126.2).

Generally, a project may foster spatial, economic, or population growth in a geographic area if it meets any one of four criteria that are identified below:

- Removal of an impediment to growth (e.g., expansion of a wastewater treatment plant or the provision of new access to an area)
- Economic expansion or growth (e.g., changes in revenue base or employment expansion, etc.)
- Establishment of a precedent setting action (e.g., an innovation, a change in zoning or general plan designation)
- Development or encroachment in an isolated or adjacent area of open space (being distinct from an “infill” type of project)

Should a project meet any one of these criteria, it can be considered growth inducing. An evaluation of this project versus these four growth-inducing criteria is provided in the sections below.

The *State CEQA Guidelines* also require that consideration also be given to potential impacts on community service facilities resulting from increases in population. **Section 5.0** of this EIR addresses potential impacts on community service facilities (e.g., police, fire, water) resulting from expected population growth both on and off the project site.

GROWTH INDUCEMENT POTENTIAL

Removal of an Impediment to Growth

Growth in an area may result from the removal of physical impediments or restrictions to growth. In this context, physical growth impediments may include nonexistent or inadequate access to an area or the lack of essential public services.

Approval of the proposed project would not directly remove physical impediments to growth, and therefore, it would not be growth inducing with respect to this criterion. The project is an expansion of a college campus, roadway extensions, a Tentative Tract Map for future development of 54 condominium units, open space parcels, and portions of the Dockweiler and Deputy Jake Drives extensions, parkland/open space dedication and water tank removal and replacement. The project site is already surrounded by existing and proposed residential and commercial development. The proposed project site is proximal to existing major roadways such that access is not a restriction, and public services (i.e., electricity, sanitary sewers, water service, natural gas, police, and fire protection) would be available and would require no major expansions or extensions.

The expansion of Dockweiler Drive is designated on the City of Santa Clarita General Plan Circulation Element Map. Any potential growth inducing impacts of the construction of the roadways were addressed when the City updated its General Plan Circulation Element (December 1997). While the expansion of Dockweiler Drive is designated as a six-lane major highway in the Circulation Element, Dockweiler Drive would be expanded to a four-lane secondary highway under the proposed project and would facilitate a lower amount of traffic than originally planned. Additionally, this extension is not growth inducing, as the land nearest its terminal points of the project are already urbanized and as discussed above it is accommodating growth already projected in the Santa Clarita General Plan. Similarly, the extension of Deputy Jake Drive would serve to facilitate traffic flow and represents a minor roadway extension in a developed area. While road extensions sometimes encourage growth, the road extension of both Dockweiler Drive and Deputy Jake Drive would facilitate circulation within the City and to The Master's College campus and do not encourage growth into the area. As such, the proposed project would not be considered growth inducing.

Economic Growth

The proposed project could potentially induce growth by introducing additional short-term employment opportunities from construction on the project site. These new, albeit temporary, employment opportunities could induce a small number of people to move into the Santa Clarita Valley. This new population could, in turn, induce incremental secondary short-term growth in the local or regional area. Long-term secondary growth, should it occur, would primarily be in the form of an economic response to the increased population and employment opportunities that could occur on the site which could incrementally increase the area's demand for local goods and services. Given this project's relatively small size in relation to the area's regional population and work force, the economic contribution of this project alone (the creation of 108 jobs) would not be considered significant.

Precedent Setting Action

Approval of this project would require approval of the master plan, a general plan amendment, Zone Change, Tentative Tract Map, Conditional Use Permit, Ridgeline Alteration Permit, Hillside Review Permit, and Oak Tree Permit. A general plan amendment would change the land use designation of the project site from RL (Residential Low) to PE (Private Education) and the area containing the 54 condominiums would be amended from PE to RM (Residential Moderate). The Zone Change would revise an area zoned as RL to PE and revise an area zoned as PE to RM to correspond to proposed general plan designations. The designation would encompass only two small portions of the project site. The zone change would not be considered precedent setting in that the pre-zoning for the site already calls for urban development for the site. Furthermore, residential suburban uses are located adjacent to the proposed residential zone. Consequently, the proposed project would not be considered growth inducing.

Development of Open Space

Development of open space is considered growth inducing when it occurs on the fringes of built-up areas, or if the development "leapfrogs" over an intervening area of open space with the expectation or if it would be developed in the reasonably foreseeable future as a result of the development. The proposed project site is situated in an area that is surrounded predominantly by existing and planned urbanized portions of the City of Santa Clarita, and a large intervening area of open space between the project and those uses would not be created. Park space/open space proposed by the project would be set aside and would not be developed in the foreseeable future. Urban services including water, sewer, police, and fire protection would require only minor and/or planned extensions, and it is unlikely that the availability of these services would create additional incentive for further development in the project area. Given that

the project is neither on the urban fringe nor does it “leap over” large tracts of open space, this project would not be considered growth inducing.

Conclusion

As the proposed project does not meet any of the growth-inducing criteria specified in this section, the proposed project is not considered growth inducing.

IMPACTS CREATED BY GROWTH

The proposed project is not considered growth inducing and would not have any impacts associated with growth.